

Claims: I claim:

1. A method of compression of graphic images which make up a video stream, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) sub-sampling a number of pixel bits from an image selected from said graphic images;
 - (b) run-length encoding repeated instances of said number of pixel bits; repeating steps (b) and (c) until each said number of pixel bits is encoded in an encoded data buffer.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the image dimensions are less than or equal to 320 by 240.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein said number of pixel bits is one of the set of 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, and 24.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein said number of pixel bits is extracted from the most significant bits of each color component.
5. An encoded video signal comprising a series of said encoded data buffers.
6. A storage medium in which the encoded video signal as claimed in claim 5 is stored.
7. A method of decompressing an encoded video signal, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) reading a stream of run-length encoded codes;
 - (b) determining a series of pixels based on the values and run-lengths of said codes;
 - (c) combining said pixels into an image; and
8. The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of displaying a series of said images.
9. The method of claim 7 wherein the width and the height of said image are less than or equal to 320 by 240, respectively.

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FIG. 10

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10. The method of claim 7 wherein said codes represent the combination most significant bits of each of the color components of each pixel.
11. A machine for compressing of a plurality of video frames which make up a video signal, comprising
 - (a) a video digitizer configured to digitizing a frame from said video frames;
 - (b) a video memory which is able to receive a plurality of pixels from said video digitizer;
 - (c) a encoding circuit for counting repeated instances of a pixel value when scanning said plurality of pixels and outputting a series of encoded data comprising a combined run-length field and a data field.
 - (d) a memory which is able to store said encoded data;
 - (e) an input/output device.
12. The machine of claim 11 wherein said encoding circuit variably selects one of a set of 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, and 24, as the number of pixel bits.
13. The machine of claim 12 wherein said pixel value is extracted from the most significant bits of each color component.
14. The machine of claim 11 wherein said input/output device is a storage medium.
15. The machine of claim 11 wherein said input/output device is a communications transmission channel.
16. A machine for decompressing an stream of encoded data that represents a video signal, comprising:
 - (a) an input/output device for reading said stream of encoded data;
 - (b) a decoding circuit which can decode the encoded data and output a stream of pixel values; and
 - (c) a memory that is able to store an image comprising said stream of pixel values that can be displayed as frames of a video sequence.

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